

Albert of Belgium an Idolized King

His Insistence on Sharing His Army's Dangers and Democratic Ways Make Him Most Popular

KING ALBERT of Belgium celebrates to-morrow the forty-third anniversary of his birth, and many hearts will go out to that little corner of Belgian territory to which he withdrew with the remnants of his gallant army close upon four years ago, converting it into an impregnable stronghold, from which the Germans have sought in vain to drive him.

He might have joined his Ministers in the French seaport of Havre, where the seat of the Belgian Government has been established since the Germans took possession first of Brussels and then of Antwerp. Or he could have followed the example of King Nicholas of Montenegro and taken up his residence in Paris, where he is an object of popular admiration by reason of the heroic resistance which he offered to the German armies when the Kaiser invaded France via Belgium. But he chose to stay with his army.

The odds that confronted King Albert when the Germans undertook to traverse his territory into France were overwhelming. He bravely faced them, and it was the unexpected obstacles which the Germans encountered in Belgium, especially at Liege, that delayed their advance sufficiently to give time to the French and English to prepare for their reception and to stem the Hun drive upon Calais and Paris.

Balked the Kaiser's War Plan.

Had it not been for the fight put up by King Albert in the early days of the war there is no doubt that the Kaiser would have accomplished his design of reaching Paris and Calais before the end of August, 1914. Under the circumstances it is no exaggeration to assert that Paris owes her safety in the present war and her immunity from siege and possible capture to King Albert, without whose resistance in Belgium in the beginning of August there would have been no battle of the Marne in September. That is why the Parisians have a particularly warm place in their hearts for King Albert.

Welcome though he would be among them, he has preferred to remain among his troops in that little corner of Belgian seacoast territory where he has made his home with his admirable consort for close upon four years and where the daily and nightly booming of the German guns alternates with the thunder of the waves on the seashore. Every now and again things are livened up there by visitations of German airplanes bent upon bombing the unpretentious villa in which the King and Queen reside or the hospitals, which are an object of the daily care of the royal couple; while Sunday morning at mass time is usually chosen by the Kaiser's aviators for their endeavors to wreck the small church in which Albert and Elizabeth perform their devotions.

Idolize King Despite Nation's Wee.

What the sufferings of the people of Belgium have been since the greater part of their native land has been subject to Teuton thralldom is known here in the New World. Not a week passes without some new story reaching us of German barbarity in the invaded regions of King Albert's dominions. Bestial savagery and outrage, famine and pillage, forced labor and indescribable tortures have been the daily fare of the unhappy Belgians. And yet, in the very lowest depths of their unutterable despair, they still continue to idolize their King and to extol him for having sacrificed everything to the national honor of Belgium by declining to permit the free passage of the Teuton armies through Belgian territory for the invasion of France.

Never one word of reproach do they utter against him for having refused with indignation to come to an understanding with the Kaiser about the matter, which would have averted many of the evils which have fallen to their share. They are more proud of their King than ever, and the fact that they are now quivering under the Kaiser's heel has rendered them more than ever devoted to the rule and person of their own sovereign.

No monarch is more deserving of the



THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF KING ALBERT OF BELGIUM
BY UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

admiration of the American people than Albert of Belgium. Alone among the occupants of the thrones of the Old World he insisted, prior to his accession to the crown, upon paying a prolonged visit to the United States, declaring that without it his education would be incomplete. He held that a knowledge of this country and of its people was an indispensable equipment for the duties of rulership and that he would be better qualified to serve his lieges as their King if his training received an American finish.

His sojourn in the United States differed from that of all other royal and imperial visitors in that it was in deference to his own demands entirely devoid of all fuss and feathers. After paying his respects in due form to the President at Washington he laid aside his royal state, enveloped himself in the strictest of incognitos and then devoted himself to a quiet and entirely unobtrusive tour of the entire Union.

It was the great industrial centres that

excited his chief interest and in which he made the longest stays. He accorded more time and attention to Pittsburg than to Philadelphia, and to Buffalo and Rochester than to New York; to Lynn and to Worcester, Mass., than to Boston, and to Providence than to Newport, R. I. At most of the places where he stayed the people remained unaware of his identity, regarding him as a foreign engineer, for he has a strong bent toward every kind of engineering.

His experiences in America, extending over a period of nearly twelve months, seem to have opened his eyes to the advantages of journalism. For after his return home he commenced to write under an assumed name for weekly papers and monthly publications devoted to industrial and maritime engineering.

Eventually he secured from one of these weekly newspapers a card made out in the name which he had taken as member of its staff. In the capacity of its representative and reporter he thereupon visited all the

Sovereign's Private Life Ideal and His Education Much Broadened by Wide Travel Incognito

principal shipbuilding and marine engineering concerns in Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, travelling alone and exciting some interest by reason of his possession of technical knowledge unusual in the ordinary newspaper man, though no one seems to have suspected him of being a prince of the blood. His letters to his paper were remarkable for their sound sense and American understanding. It was not until some years afterwards that their authorship was revealed.

Shortly before Albert's succession to the throne he made a prolonged tour in Africa characterized by the same simplicity and unobtrusiveness that had marked his sojourn in the United States. He entered the Dark Continent at Cape Town and then made his way by rail, by boat and by caravan to Lake Tanganyika and thence through the former Congo Free State, now Belgium's great African dependency, down the Congo River to its mouth on the Atlantic coast.

Ended Abuses in the Congo.

His visit to Congoland was of incalculable value to Belgium. For aside from the encouragement which he was able to give to lonely servants of the Belgian crown working for their sovereign in spots wholly remote from civilization and often under the most discouraging circumstances he was able to rectify and put an end to thousands of abuses and to initiate all sorts of reforms. Indeed it was thanks to his careful and patient investigation of life and conditions in Congoland that it had become by the beginning of the present war a source of prosperity and pride to the Belgian nation, a valuable asset to the cause of civilization and of commercial and industrial development of all that vast region of the Dark Continent instead of being as formerly a blot upon humanity and a source of international scandal and shame.

Another thing in King Albert which appeals strongly to his people and to their friends and sympathizers here in America has been the singularly blameless nature of his private life, which has remained both prior to his marriage and ever since untouched by any breath of scandal. The Belgians had suffered from the shortcomings in this respect of their first King and also of his eldest son and successor, the late King Leopold II., whose indiscretions were so flagrant and notorious as to become a source of shame and of mortification to his subjects. King Albert's life, like that of his parents, the late Count and Countess of Flanders, has been entirely above reproach and an example to his people. He owes this largely to the training of his clever mother, who, although a daughter of the Roman Catholic and non-reigning branch of the house of Hohenzollern, had a strong strain of French blood in her veins through her grandmother, the Grand Duchess of Baden, who was Stephanie de Beauharnais, adopted daughter of Napoleon I., and her great-grandmother, who had been married as Princess Antoinette Murat.

His Marriage a Love Match.

King Albert's irreproachable life is also due to his wife, Queen Elizabeth. Royal marriages as a rule are the result of dynastic arrangements, international policy and diplomatic negotiation. His was a love match pure and simple and such it has remained ever since, the trials, the sorrows, the hardships and the dangers which they have shared in common during the last four years having served to bring them even more closely together.

The Queen is a daughter of that Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria who acquired celebrity as an oculist and who devoted his entire life to administering to the poor free of cost, rescuing many thousands from blindness. But Queen Elizabeth, like King Albert, has closed her doors forever to her German relatives and cut herself entirely adrift from them not only for the duration of the war but for all time. For neither one nor the other of this royal couple can ever forget or forgive what their loyal people have suffered at German hands since July, 1914.

New York's Town Clocks

SHOULD any one object that the placing of a bell with the clock in the new cupola of New York's City Hall to toll the hours to the downtown population smacks too much of a small village, it may be recalled that so large a community as London has never disdained town clocks.

Compared with some of the timepieces in the British metropolis the City Hall clock will be a modest affair, the single bell weighing only 1,500 pounds. This was cast forty years ago for the village of Tremont and was used to warn Tremonters of visits by the fire demon. It became the property of the city when the little burg was annexed.

The Westminster clock in London has five bells, the smallest of them weighing 2,100 pounds, while the largest, Old Ben, which strikes the hours, weighs thirteen and a half tons.

But if New York's new town clock is to be somewhat insignificant in comparison, there remain others in and near the city which will continue to uphold this town's reputation for remarkable timepieces. The Colgate clock, commanding the North River from its position on the Jersey City water front, is in a class by itself among all the clocks of the world. There is only one dial, but that is thirty-eight feet in diameter, measured from inside the black circle of numerals. It has an area of more than 1,134 square feet, 544 more square feet than in the face of the clock on the Philadelphia City Hall.

The minute hand is twenty feet long and its tip end travels twenty-four inches every minute. The hour hand measures fifteen feet. The pendulum weighs 350 pounds and the weight that moves the mechanism 2,000 pounds.

Two hundred persons could stand on the face of the dial if it were laid flat on

the ground. On a clear day the hands and numerals may be distinguished for three miles.

The Colgate clock has been ticking away the hours since May, 1908. Before that time the clock in the tower of the St. Rombaud Cathedral, in Malines, Belgium, held the world's record for size, but it is now no more, the Germans having demolished it when they bombarded the city in September, 1914. The famous chimes of St. Rombaud also were destroyed. The extreme diameter of the Malines dial was thirty-seven and a half feet, six inches less than that of the Colgate clock.

The clock in the Metropolitan Life tower has four dials, each 26½ feet across and each runs independently of the others. The figures are four feet high. A master clock on the ground floor controls the entire mechanism and that of a hundred other clocks in the building. The chimes weigh from 7,000 to 13,000 pounds.

The dials in the clock of Trinity Church are twelve feet in diameter and the largest bell in the chimes weighs 7,000 pounds. St. Paul's clock, which is wound by hand, was put in place in the last century.

The clock in front of the Hall of Records is one of the most expensive in the country, the cost having been more than \$35,000. The movement controls the clocks in all the several departments of the building. It stopped one day several years ago at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and the clerks in the Register's office worked eleven minutes overtime before they realized they were giving their services for nothing.

Cooper Union's clock is regarded as one of the best in New York. It also operates a system in the different offices of the building. In the Hoboken terminal of the Lackawanna Railroad is a self-winding clock with a dial diameter of twelve feet.